

Message Text

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SUBJECT: STUDENT-RELATED VIOLENCE INTENSIFIES

REF: ANKARA 181 (DTG 101100Z JAN 77)

1. THE RISING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE, MAINLY STUDENT-RELATED, IS STEADILY GROWING AS A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE. THE PAST WEEK WAS PARTICULARLY BLOODY, WITH NINE PERSONS KILLED JANUARY 20-25 (SEVEN STUDENTS, ONE TEACHER, AND ONE COFFEE-HOUSE EMPLOYEE); WIDESPREAD BOMBINGS, APPARENTLY LEFTIST-PERPETRATED (TARGETS WERE MOSTLY BUSINESS ASSOCIATED OR THE ULTRA-RIGHTIST IDEALIST HEARTHS); AND AN ABOVE-NORMAL NUMBER OF CAMPUS RIOTS, SHOOTINGS, AND STABBINGS, INCLUDING ONE MELEE AT ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY DURING WHICH POLICE REPORTEDLY BEAT UP TWO DEANS.

2. ALTHOUGH PUBLIC OPINION HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT CALLOUSED
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WITH REGARD TO THE LONG-CONTINUING VIOLENCE, THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS ESCALATION IS CLEARLY NOW BEING SEEN BY BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION AS A THREAT TO STABILITY. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24, WHICH LASTED FIVE AND A HALF HOURS AND REPORTEDLY CONCERNED "DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS" WAS ATTENDED BY THE MINISTERS OF JUSTICE AND OF EDUCATION (NOT NORMALLY

MEMBERS), INDICATING THAT STUDENT VIOLENCE WAS A MAJOR ITEM ON THE AGENDA. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CONSIDERED THE ISSUE DURING ITS JANUARY 27 MEETING.

3. JANUARY 26 PRESS CARRIED JOINT APPEAL AGAINST THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE SIGNED BY FOUR PRESS ORGANIZATIONS AND 22 NEWSPAPERS COVERING MOST OF THE ENTIRE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL SPECTRUM FROM THE FAR RIGHT (HERGUN, BAYRAK) TO THE FAR LEFT (VATAN). THE JOINT STATEMENT APPEALED TO ALL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT AND TO ALL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION TO END THE VIOLENCE.

IT APPEALED TO YOUTH AND ALL NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO REFRAIN FROM ALL DISRUPTIVE ACTS.

4. JANUARY 27 PRESS ALSO CARRIES LONG STATEMENT BY OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY LEADER ECEVIT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS, "TO SIT DOWN WITH ANYONE IN ORDER TO SAVE THE REGIME, TO SAVE YOUNG PEOPLE, AND TO PROVIDE SECURITY OF LIFE TO OUR COUNTRYMEN," THE STATEMENT IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, WAS NOT CONCILIATORY IN TONE, CHARGING AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT "THE LEVEL OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS, OF POLITICAL CRIMES IN TURKEY HAS REACHED DIMENSIONS NOT FOUND IN ANY OTHER CIVILIZED COMMUNITY" AND THAT "SOME GROUPS OPENLY SUPPORTED AND PROTECTED BY SOME BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE CREATING ARMED INCIDENTS." PRİMİN DEMİREL, WHO WAS ASKED JANUARY 27 ABOUT ECEVIT'S "CALL TO MEET AND DISCUSS" THE VIOLENCE, REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF SUCH A MOVE BY ECEVIT AND THAT THE ONLY THING ECEVIT HAD DONE WAS TO RELEASE THE "PERPETRATORS OF ANARCHY."

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5. COMMENT: THE NEW MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT EARLIER THIS MONTH (REFTEL) MAY BE OVERTAKEN BY THE RISING TIDE OF VIOLENCE BEFORE THEY CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AND TESTED. NEVERTHELESS, DEMİREL WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO TRY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT LAWS SIMPLY BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVES ARE POLITICALLY DIFFICULT AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE. RE-LEGISLATION OF POST-1971-COUP SECURITY LAWS (WHICH HAVE BEEN STRUCK DOWN BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT) WOULD REQUIRE THE COOPERATION--OR ACQUIESCENCE--OF THE OPPOSITION. SIMILARLY, PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL IS NECESSARY FOR THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW, AND SUCH APPROVAL IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY IN THIS ELECTION YEAR. THEREFORE, DESPITE A SEEMING INCREASE IN PUBLIC SENSITIVITY TO THE TRAGEDY OF STUDENT VIOLENCE, EFFECTIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

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